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JP W Burton

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Paul W Burton

Handwritten text, likely a signature or name, written in a cursive script. The text is oriented vertically and appears to be written on aged, yellowed paper. The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and stylized.





“Here is a poor kitten that he has almost killed ; and here is his handkerchief, which I should like to have him come and take.”—p. 10.

THE

MURDERED MOTHER.

WRITTEN FOR THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, AND
REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

Philadelphia :

AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,
NO. 146 CHESTNUT STREET.

ENTERED according to Act of Congress, in the year 1835,
By **PAUL BECK, Jr., Treasurer,**
in trust for the American Sunday-school Union, in the Clerk's
Office of the District Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylv-
ania.

THE
MURDERED MOTHER.

I ONCE spent two or three years at P——, as the teacher of a grammar school; and took quite an active interest in the Sunday-school.

As I was returning one day from a visit to one of the lads in my class, I saw a boy throwing oyster-shells at a kitten. He had tied the poor little animal to the fence by his pocket-handker-

chief, and had already hit her with the shells, so as to mangle her leg most cruelly.

I told him to stop; but he threw a shell again and again. I went towards him, and he ran, with a shell in his hand. After he had gone a few rods he turned around, and threw the shell at me.



As soon as I could get to her, I released the poor little kitten, and found, by the mark on the pocket-handkerchief, that the cruel boy's name was—*Jacob Millman*.

I inquired of a group of children near by, if they knew such a boy as Jacob Millman.

“Yes, sir, yes, sir,” cried one and another; “he lives in that house, with high steps before the door, just beyond that willow tree.”

One of the older boys, who was quite civil and well-behaved, said, he was going that way to

the Post-office, and would show me the very house.

As we walked along, I asked my young friend what he knew of *Jacob*. He said, he had never had much to do with him. He was a bad boy, and every body gave him the name of it. And he thought the less he had to do with such a boy, the better it was for him.

“Did he ever go to Sunday-school?” said I.

“Yes, sir; he was in the same class with me, but he only went a few months, and was always late; and never had a lesson,

and almost always forgot his library-book."

When I had come to the house, I found I was followed by several children, who had seen me with a kitten in my hands, and wondered what I was going to do with it. While I was talking with them about the cruel treatment the poor little creature had suffered, and about the sin of using any animal unkindly, Jacob's mother came to the door, and my young friend immediately told me, that the woman at the door was Mrs. Millman.

I saw Jacob within the house,

just behind his mother; but the moment he perceived who I was, he skulked away into the yard. I asked his mother if she would call him in, as I had something I wished to say to him.

“What has he done, sir? Has he injured any body?” asked Mrs. Millman.

“Why,” said I, “he has shown himself to be a very wicked, cruel boy. Here is a poor kitten that he has almost killed; and here is his handkerchief, which I should like to have him come and take.”—[*See Frontispiece.*]

“Come here, Jacob,” cried

Mrs. Millman, opening the door that led into the yard; "come here, I tell you, and hear what the gentleman has to say."

"I ha'nt touched him," muttered the boy; "and it's my kitten, and he han't no business with it, nor with me neither."

"He is a bad boy, sir; a very bad boy," said his mother; "and I do not know what will become of him."

"How old is he?"

"Ten years old, next month," she replied.

"How long has his father been dead?"

“He died when Jacob was a little over a year old.”

“Does he go to Sunday-school?”

“No; he does not like to go to Sunday-school, and never did. He went a while, but the teacher found fault with him for not coming in better season, and he quit the school, and I couldn’t get him to go back by all I could say to him.”

“Did his teacher never come to inquire after him?”

“I never heard of the teacher after the boy left; and I did not care to see him, for I don’t think

he treated the child as he would like to have his own boy treated."

"Can he read?"

"He could if he would, but he is all the time out."

"Do you keep him at home in the evening?"

"I do, sometimes; but he contrives to slip out almost every night without my knowing it, and gets with other boys; and if you know any thing about this neighbourhood, you know there are a plenty such boys, and bad enough they are too."

"My good woman," said I, "there's reason to believe, that if

you both live, that boy will cost you a great many tears. I see you have no control over him. You cannot even make him come to me to get his handkerchief. Now I warn you, that he will grow worse and worse as he grows older. And, lightly as you may think of it, I should not be at all surprised if he should bring down your gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. You are not acting the part of a kind and faithful mother to him, in letting him have his own way ; and I fear you will see the time when you will mourn that you

did not restrain and correct him in the days of his wildness and folly."

She seemed to take what I said, rather unkindly. When I proposed to get him a good place in the Sunday-school, she said, she had no very good opinion of Sunday-schools, since she knew more about them, and how her boy was treated at one of them. I then proposed to bring him an interesting book; but she said, "he had more books now than he was willing to read; and she did not know whether it was a good plan to be tying children

to books all their days." I gave her the handkerchief, and put the kitten upon the floor, and went on my way.

Soon after this, I left the town, and passed through a course of study for the ministry. After I had preached a few years, my health failed me, and I was obliged to travel. My course led me through P——, where I spent the Sabbath. The place had been much changed during my absence. New houses had been built, and old ones repaired and painted. Old trees had been cut or blown down, and new

ones set out. Many of the old men and women had gone down to the grave, and their sons and daughters had come up into their places

- The pastor was absent, and I consented to preach one part of the day, though I was in feeble health.

Public prayers were requested in behalf of a woman who was supposed to be just closing life. And I found, upon inquiry, after service, it was the same Mrs. Millman, whose boy I had followed home some years before.

A few circumstances were

mentioned, which called back to my recollection all the scenes I have related about the boy and the kitten ; and at the earnest request of the neighbours, I went to see the sick woman, in the afternoon, although she now lived at a distance from town.

I found she was, indeed, a poor, miserable, dying creature. The house and furniture were very mean and comfortless ; though there was an air of neatness about her bed and her dress that told of the kind offices of a neighbour.

Soon after I began to con-

verse with her, I told her who I was, and reminded her of my former acquaintance with her, and of the incident about the kitten; and asked her if the boy was living.

“O, sir,” said she, covering her face with the bed-clothes, ‘THAT BOY HAS KILLED ME.’”

She soon composed herself,



and collecting what little strength she had, raised herself partly up, and spoke as follows :—

“About three years,—perhaps it was four or five years—after you left this town, a precious minister of the gospel came here. There was a great change in the minds and ways of people, and my neighbour, here, Mrs. Prince, (looking towards the good woman who was kindly nursing her,) would have me go and hear him. God had patience with me to let me live till that time. Then he showed mercy to my soul, by leading me

to a place of prayer, where I heard the blessed news, that Jesus Christ had come into the world to save sinners, and where my eyes were opened to see what my true state was. I hope I there found a Saviour. I think that he has been near and precious to me ever since ; and I am sure he is nearer and more precious to me now than ever before. And for all this, I do bless and praise his great and holy name. But that boy—O, that boy,—if I had followed him to the grave that day you followed him home—but it is well—”

After a short pause, she continued:—

“I was going to tell you, sir, Jacob got to be so unsteady and mischievous that, at last, I was persuaded by the neighbours to put him in the House of Refuge, in ——. I had often heard that this was a good place, and that many boys had been made better by being there; and though it was a hard trial, I consented to his being put there. He was in the House of Refuge better than thirteen months. I was very far from feeling easy about him, and I finally persuaded some of my friends to get him out. He had

behaved himself, generally, very well; and upon my earnest desire that he might be returned to me, and upon his solemn and repeated promises that he would not go back to his old ways, he was sent home.

“I persuaded my neighbour, Mr. Drummond, to take him, and teach him the trade of a wheelwright. He liked Mr. Drummond, and liked the trade very well, but in spite of all I could do or say, he would not be bound. I told him how much safer he would be, how much temptation he might avoid, and how much more likely he would be to be

steady, if he was bound ; but he said, “ he would not be bound to anybody. He was not made to be bound.” He was willing to stay with Mr. Drummond, as long as they could both agree ; but “ he would be no man’s slave.”

“ About three months after he went to his trade, there was a military parade near by, and Jacob wanted to go ; but there was some pressing work in the shop, which Mr. Drummond was very anxious to have done, and he refused to let him go. That night he ran away ; and I did not see him for almost a month. It was during this time that the

Lord had mercy on my soul, and brought me to feel the worth of a Saviour. When he came back, I had a long conversation with him, in which he seemed willing to tell me about all his evil ways. I found he had made some very bad acquaintances before he went to the House of Refuge; and that every day he was in the company of profane, idle, and Sabbath-breaking boys. In the evening he would pretend he had to go to one place and another, yet he never would tell me where he had been, or what he had been doing. I have no doubt that he was then in the

way of going to taverns, and other drinking places. Weeks and months passed in this way, and no tongue can tell what I suffered in that time. I walked my chamber many nights—the whole live-long night—waiting for that boy to come home, and thinking what would become of him if he was not checked in his downward way. I prayed that God would forgive all his mother's negligence and improper indulgence of him, and save the boy from the dreadful power of the wicked one. I tried—O, how often—to persuade him to do better.

“One morning in particular, I remember I went to him, and my tears fell upon his clothes, as I stood over him, and besought him to forsake his evil companions. He wiped my tears away carelessly; turned from me, and went away, muttering some bad words, of which I heard enough to make my heart ache. Surely, I thought, ‘*a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.*’

“By the kindness of some of my neighbours, Jacob got employment in the grocery store, next below the school-house. One morning, Mr. Wilkins, the grocer, sent him to the bank

with some money. On his way, he met with an old acquaintance, who persuaded him to make off with what he had got. He did so; but was taken up that very night, and brought back, and nearly all the money found in his possession. The officer was kind enough to bring him home, that he might see me. It was late in the evening.



“He fell on his knees, and begged me to save him, and promised every thing good. He said, if I would only let him stay that night, he would give himself up the next morning. I told him it was too late for me to help him; and that I could only pray for him, and I would do that night and day, as long as I had breath. As he was leaving the door, I said to him, ‘Jacob, when I hear where you are, I will send you some comfortable clothes, poor as I am; and if you are sick, I will come and see you. But you are in God’s hands, my poor child, and my

last nope is, that God will, for Christ's sake, yet have mercy upon your soul.'

"As he went away from the house, I was sitting by that window," said she, pointing to an open window on the other side of the room, "and I could not but say, within myself, 'Is it possible that a child of mine, and a child too that I loved as I did that boy, is in the hands of an officer, on his way to jail!'"

"When he came to be tried before the court, he sent for me to come and help him; but I could not go; and I knew I could do him no good if I did

go. He was sent to prison for eighteen months, and his time will be out next spring. But I cannot tell you all. O, sir, it is—it is, indeed, a bitter thing to a mother to have a thoughtless, wicked child. It has weighed me down night and day; and now, I think what will become of him when he comes out of prison. But I shall not be here. I know the Judge of all the earth will do right: the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. I am willing to give him up to the will of Him who does all things well.”

This was the substance of the

dying woman's story. She was often interrupted by a gush of tears, and several times her strength almost failed her.

I thought it would be cruel to remind her of the words I had spoken to her many years before, when I followed this same child home from his cruel sport. I prayed with her, and for her, and for her profligate child; and in less than a week, as I afterwards learned, the good woman was taken from this valley of tears, and admitted, I trust, to a better and brighter world.

O, if children could but know what sorrows they heap upon a

mother's heart, when they are pursuing their wicked courses, they would shudder at their own guilt. They would as soon think of lifting their hands to shed a mother's blood, as of piercing her heart through and through with such bitter sorrows. They drink wine ; they laugh and sing ; they forget and forsake home, and wander away with the thoughtless and profane ; while the mother that brought them into being, and fed, and nursed, and watched over them in helpless infancy, and took care of them in sickness and in health, by night and by day, is at home,

perhaps, in some lonely chamber, mourning over their folly, and pouring out tears and prayers before God on their account. What a picture of ingratitude and sin is seen in a thoughtless, thankless, rebellious child!

Jacob was discharged from prison at the end of eighteen months; but before he had been out a week, he was tempted to go to the theatre, where he stole a pocket-book from a countryman's pocket. He was suspected, and pursued. When the officer came up to arrest him, he seized a stick of wood, and struck him so severely that he died that

same night. The wretched young man was thrown back again into a gloomy prison ; was afterwards tried, and found guilty of murder ; and is now passing his silent, lonely life in one of our penitentiaries.

It is not long since I saw him in his solitary dwelling-place. After an hour's conversation with him on a variety of subjects, I said to him, "Well, Millman, I suppose you sometimes think of your mother, and your treatment of her?"

"Ah! that I do," said the unhappy young man. "Yes, sir, I do, indeed. Often have I started

up from that narrow bed of mine, (pointing to an iron framed bedstead that was turned up against the wall, in one corner of his cell,) often have I started up from that bed, in the darkness of the night, and thrown the clothes off from me, while my hair stood up stiff upon my head, and a cold shivering crept over my body; and I have opened my mouth to cry—**MY MOTHER! MY MURDERED MOTHER!** Bad as I am, my lips have quivered when I have laid me down again, and my tears have come as a little child's, *until I could not find a dry place to lay my cheek upon."*









P. W. Burton

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